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UNCLAS ALMATY 003609

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CACEN (J. MUDGE)

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KZ](#) [POLITICAL](#)

SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: POLICE RAID KAHAR YOUTH MOVEMENT OFFICES

REF: Almaty 2838

1. (SBU) Summary: Police raided the Almaty office of the Kahar movement on October 4, allegedly in search of proof of foreign financing of the relatively controversial youth protest movement. So far there have been no arrests or seizures as a result of the raid. The action was likely connected to a presidential decree ordering the procuracy to step up its oversight of the electoral process. End summary.

2. (SBU) The evening of October 4, eight police officers from the city police department on the fight against organized crime raided the Almaty office of the Kahar youth movement (reftel). According to Kahar leader Bakhytzhan Toregozhina, the officers said that they were looking for "cash received from abroad." She refused to produce the group's accounting records because the police did not have a warrant. After other activists arrived, two platoons of police (approx. 100) blockaded the office. Toregozhina told POL FSN that in the three-hour search the only item of interest the police found were leaflets containing election rules, produced as part of a voter education campaign. The police did not arrest anyone or seize anything.

3. (SBU) Toregozhina told POL FSN that the police said the raid was the result of a complaint filed by the mother of one activist. The activist believes his mother was blackmailed and forced to file the complaint. As reported reftel, Kahar's open links with youth movements in Ukraine (Pora) and Kyrgyzstan (Kel-Kel) have made them a likely target for GOK scrutiny.

4. (SBU) After completing the search, the police asked Toregozhina to come to police headquarters on October 5. Toregozhina told us she planned to comply with the request and had hired well-known human rights lawyer Serikkali Musin to accompany her.

5. (SBU) A Kahar representative called the Embassy during the raid to report the events and request guidance. Post advised the group to cooperate fully with the authorities.

6. (SBU) Comment: This event is likely linked to President Nazarbayev's September 9 decree on elections, which instructed the procuracy to increase its oversight of the electoral process. For a Just Kazakhstan has reported searches of several of its regional offices following publication of the decree. Post will stay in contact with Toregozhina to ascertain whether there is likely to be legal action against Kahar. End comment.

7. (U) Dushanbe minimize considered.

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